

The Resistors

by Taly

Category: Half-Life

Genre: Adventure

Language: English

Status: Completed

Published: 2006-01-26 01:30:10

Updated: 2006-02-16 03:47:10

Packaged: 2016-04-26 21:52:03

Rating: T

Chapters: 3

Words: 3,155

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: After the victory at the Citadel, the Resistance in City 17 still has a lot of work to do. The city is in ruins, the citizens terrified, the aliens encroaching from all sides... Abandoned due to becoming completely AU.

1. Urban Clearance

Urban Clearance

The team fanned through the abandoned house, weapons at the ready. The two men in front shouted a warning to the people behind them, and small arms fire exploded into life, riddling two headcrabs with bullets. The bare concrete walls were pocked with old bullet holes, and the rooms were filled with dusty boxes, the detritus of humanity left behind in the panicked flight from this district. Now, however, the Combine in City 17 were in full retreat, barely holding on to a handful of fortified enclaves by the harbor. When their citadel exploded and collapsed in on itself, less than a month before, the alien war machines ground to a shuddering halt, and their armies of collaborators and pawns were thrown into confusion.

Since then, the Resistance exploded from hiding all around the city, taking back what was once theirs and forcing the remnants of the Overwatch to retreat their shielded outposts along the coast. Under the guidance of Commanders Alyx Vance and Barney Calhoun, units of resistance fighters were cleaning the city of any remaining alien infestation.

"All floors are clear! No xenos left alive," shouted a black-haired woman with an old-fashioned shotgun. She kicked open the last door and scanned the room, relaxing when she found it empty. No traps, no more aliens, no planted manhacksâ€¦ though, she noted with revulsion, there were bloodstains leading to a trap door in the far corner.

"Uh, boss?" she called over her shoulder. "Found a basement,

bloodstains leading down."

"Alright, Roxy, let me radio it in." The team's leader, a middle-aged black man wearing scavenged Civil Protection armor, ran his fingers over his shaved head. He flicked a small piece of rubble from the gold lambda emblazoned on his armband, and pulled a small radio from his belt. "Black Mesa East, this is Urban Clearance Team Four, over."

There was a crackle of static for a second, and then the radio came to life. "Team Four? This is Black Mesa East, we read you, over."

"Mesa, we're in City 17 Downtown, sector four. Buildingâ€|" He paused to check the digital readout on his PDA. "â€|building one-four is clear, but we've found a basement with bloodstains. Possible headcrab and zombie infestation below ground, over."

"Gotcha. Let me wire it up to the Commander." There was a brief pause. "Ok, should get a reply in a minute. You know, there aren't any more Combine in the area, far as we know, we can call this city Baki again, if we want, over."

"Mesa, I don't even know what _country_ this used to be. I'm from Chicago â€“ they shipped me over here right after the War. Guess I was lucky, Chicago wasn't around long enough become a numbered city, Combine bastards just wiped it off the map. Over."

"Sorry to hear about that. Yeah, City 17 used to be part of the Azerbaijan. Wasn't too much of a big deal before the war, no nuclear weapons or big armies, which is why it was more or less intact at the end of it. Guess that's why Breen set up shop here, over."

"Wonder if we'll ever get around to setting up those old countries, over."

"Don't know. Guess we should. Alright, here you go, message from the boss. 'Investigate basement, clear out any xenofauna and infected humans, report back. Also, um, be reminded that the radio is not a cell phone, so shut the hell up and maintain radio discipline, Commander Vance.' Eh-heh. Oops. Um, Black Mesa East out."

"UCT4 out." The team leader chuckled to himself as he turned off his radio. "Sorry, Mesa, didn't mean to get you in trouble with the boss. Alright, team four, listen up!" he shouted. "Pierre, Roxanne, you head down into the basement, clear out any uglies, report back. The rest of you, stay up here with me, check the house for any supplies worth scavenging."

The woman with the shotgun turned to the man standing next to her, a slim, black haired man with a pencil-thin mustache. "Ready to kick some butt, Frenchy?" she said with false cheerfulness.

"Absolument. We'll report back in a little bit, boss," he said, unlocking the safety on his Combine-manufactured submachine gun. The small touches of his native language were another rebellion against the Combine, which had mandated early in its reign that all of its cities' citizens speak English for efficiency's sake.

Roxanne and Pierre kicked in the basement's trap door and peered down into the dim light. "Be careful down there," James warned, checking his PDA again. "When Dr. Freeman kicked-started this whole revolution at Nova Prospekt, the Combine shelled the hell out of this sector, headcrabs everywhere. We never had a base here, though, and all the shelling did was turn a lot of innocent people into zombies. So far, we've seen a lot of head crabs, but haven't found any zombies, and that makes me nervousâ€¦ so be careful down there."

"Always am, boss," Roxanne said with a nervous smile, and then she dropped out of sight into the darkness below.

2. The One Free Man

The One Free Man

"I never feel right killing zombies," she confided to her partner when he dropped down the ladder beside her. "I was in Ravenholme, you know, before the Combine found out about itâ€¦ so many of us were turned into zombies, its like, I don't know. They all used to be people, is there some little part of them still there?"

"Ze CPs are people, too," Pierre replied, peering into the dim light. "You do not seem to have ze problems with keeling them, no?"

"That's different," she protested. "People who are turned into zombies don't have a choice, where people volunteered to join CP and the Overwatch. Those traitors make me sickâ€¦" Her voice trailed off as a weird scream sounded from the darkness, raising every hair on the back of her neck. She was all too familiar with that sound â€“ some poor soul with a headcrab eating his brain, sensing prey nearby.

Roxanne shouted a warning and flicked on the flashlight attached to end of her riot gun barrel. It was an old weapon, scavenged from a destroyed police station in the aftermath of the Seven Hours War, but was lovingly maintained and fully effective. When the first zombie emerged from a shattered doorway, the weapon thundered and the buckshot caught it square in the chest, blasting it to pieces and knocking it off its feet. She ratcheted another shell into the barrel of the gun and took out the second zombie, while Pierre caught a third in a burst of submachine gun fire that shredded its headcrab. The zombie, denied its master, took a single unsteady step and collapsed in the dust at their feet. She grit her teeth together, fighting down nausea.

Her companion, however, seemed entirely unaffected. "So," Pierre shouted, still mostly deafened from the shotgun blast in the enclosed space, "tell me more about ze One Free Man! You fought beside him in ze final push on ze Citadel, non_?"

Roxanne pursed her lips in annoyance, and shook her head in an attempt to dull the ringing in her ears. Pierre was an experienced rebel, but a new member of the Black Mesa East cell. He was originally from City 6, all the way on the other side of Europe, and had recently transferred over from the cell there. City 6 was the first city to surrender to Combine rule, and as such, it had survived the Seven Hours War almost untouched â€“ but it also was home to the one of the most active and violent Resistance Cells. Le Fraternite,

as they called themselves, went into open rebellion after Freeman smashed Nova Prospekt.

They were extraordinarily successful, smashing clear through their Citadel's outer rings of defense and, using a fleet of APCs captured from a Combine outpost, led a direct assault into the bowels of their citadel. They managed to destroy the Combine Bulk Matter Transmitter and smashed the Citadel's Overwatch control node, cutting off the flow of alien reinforcements and sending the local collaborators into full retreat. The stunning victory at City 6 gave heart to the other revolutions sweeping through Europe. Using captured Combine bullet trains, Le Fraternite started sending reinforcements to other embattled cities.

Pierre apparently fought hard for the honor to be sent to City 17, and had done so in hope of seeing the One Free Man, the living legend, and fighting beside him. He was devastated to learn that Gordon Freeman was missing and apparently dead after the final battle of the Citadel, but he had joined Commander Vance and a few other optimistic souls in arguing that Freeman must simply have found another way to escape. Since his assignment he'd been talking to everyone who had ever met "the Free Man," wanting to know more.

"He wasn't 'the One Free Man,'" she said, putting two new shells into her riot gun. "His name was Gordon Freeman, and he wasâ€œ! _ohmygod it's still alive kill it kill it!_"

The headcrab had detached itself from the head of the first zombie and launched itself at her. Roxanne fired wildly, gouging a chunk out of the concrete floor, but she missed the little alien. The thing clawed at her head with its little hooked limbs, but she tore it off of her face and threw it in a corner where Pierre emptied the remainder of his magazine into it, tearing it to pieces.

"Thanks," Roxanne said, bringing her hand up to touch the wounds on her face. "That could have gone really badly for me."

"It was not a problem," Pierre replied modestly, reaching into his satchel for a fresh clip. "Le Fraternite used ze sewers of Paris," he pronounced it the old French way, Roxy noticed, 'Pear-ee,' "to connect our bases throughout ze city. Of course, ze Combine flooded ze tunnels with leetle aliens, so I am quite used to combating zem."

Roxy tried to smile, but the gashes on her face made the attempt painful, so she stopped. "Let's head back topside," she said, slinging her shotgun over her shoulder and pressing a gloved hand to her cheek to staunch the blood that was dripping off her chin on to her body armor and uniform.

"â€œand find a medic."

"_Oui_. "

3. Black Mesa East

Black Mesa East

By the time Urban Clearance Team 4 made it back to Black Mesa East,

the sun was setting into the sea, and a cold wind from the north had all of the Resistance fighters shivering despite their sweaters and knit caps. Roxy scowled at the old hydroelectric plant â€“ though she knew the Combine were gone, the veteran rebel within her howled in protest at the complete lack of camouflage around the facility.

"It's bad enough that we've returned to a place where the Combine know we have a base," she complained to Jim Green, the unit leader. "But now we've got the exterior lights energized, boats docking openly at the entrance, and guys with guns patrolling the perimeters! This is not how to keep a low profile." Still nursing her bad mood, she reached up to pick at the clotted blood on her cheek, and then glared daggers at Pierre when he reached his hand out and prevented her from doing so. Again. "Would you stop doing that?"

The Frenchman just shrugged. "You should not be picking at eet," he said.

"Pierre, I'm cold and my face hurts and this shotgun is heavy as hell and I'm going into a building that might as well say 'Combine attack here' in bright neon lighting! Stop it! I itch, let me scratch it, alright?"

Two of the sentries turned towards the sound and raised their assault rifles at the patrol, but relaxed when Jim sent the "all-clear" signal over his radio. "Roxy, we'll have somebody patch that up in just a few minutes. Just be patient," Jim said in his slow, deep voice, scratching at a scar that stretched up his neck. The pink line was easily visible against the dark brown of the rest of his skin.

The sometimes-flirtatious squabbling of the two youngest members of his team sometimes made Jim feel more like a high-school teacher than a military commander. For a brief, aching moment, Jim thought about his own daughter, separated from him during his first Combine transfer. He was a mechanic, he was useful to the conquerors, so he was transferred to New York â€“ City 1, the aliens called it â€“ right before Chicago was "sterilized." When he addressed Roxanne, he used the same placating tone he remembered once using on his daughter, a long time ago. "Besides," he added, "with the Citadel destroyed, this plant is the only source for electricity within fifty miles, so we had to get it up and running again â€“ unless you think we ought to let people freeze to death this winter."

"I know," Roxy replied in the same sulky tone. "But that doesn't mean I'm under any obligations to like it. I was here when the Combine raided this place the first time, you know."

"Really?" Pierre asked as the patrol walked past the automated turrets and entered the airlock leading into the base. "You never mentioned zat before."

Roxanne scowled at the scorch marks at the base of the new airlock door â€“ specifically, where the Combine had used explosives to blast through the last one. "Let's just say it wasn't one of my finest moments."

There were chuckles from the rest of the patrol. "Someday, you will have to tell me about zis incident," Pierre said, sensing that

whatever had happened obviously contained some comedic value, and was common knowledge within the cell.

"Someday," she replied with an unhelpful giggle, but her flirtatious smile became a pained wince as the motion allowed the cuts on her cheeks to reopen. "If I can still _talk_," she finished crossly, trying without much success to keep the trickle of blood off of her blue sweater.

"Here," Pierre said, pulling a more-or-less clean cloth from his pocket and using it to dab at her cheek. "Let's take you down to ze second level, and talk to Abraham, get you patched up."

'Honest Abe' was a Vortigaunt that was, as far as the human members of Black Mesa East could tell, a very old and wise member of his race â€“ his mottled skin was cracked and brittle, and his single eye was dull, but his hands were still skilled and he seemed even more wise and mysterious than the other aliens in the facility. He was nearly always found in the medical ward on the second level, assisting Dr. Cheng, the cell's surgeon and chief medic.

Roxy bid a brief farewell to the rest of the team and ducked into the recently-repaired elevator. She was mildly surprised to find Pierre joining her, though, she reflected, she _was_ still holding his handkerchief to her face, so she probably shouldn't have been. The two of them stood in silence for a few seconds as the lift creaked and rattled, and then shuddered to a halt on the second floor down.

Bare bulbs and blank, gritty concrete floors greeted them as they left the lift and entered what the Resistance members ironically called "The Clinic." Pierre beamed at the old, bent figure of the Vortigaunt shuffling towards them, leaning upon it's staff. "'Ello, Abe," he said. "Roxy here had an ecounter with one of ze leetle headcrabs."

"Ah," the alien said gently, his voice sounding like the crunch of heavy boots on gravel. "The Girl-Roxanne will be following, and this old one will see to her hurts."

"Thanks, Frenchy," Roxanne groused to her companion, but she dutifully followed Abraham to a cot under one of the harsh bulbs. "It's really not that big of a deal, you know," she informed the room at large, though the other two wounded occupants of the Clinic were either sleeping or unconscious, and neither Pierre nor Abraham chose to reply.

There was silence while Abraham's long, delicate fingers probed the edges of Roxanne's injury. Pierre looked away and shifted his weight awkwardly, but the girl simply stared the alien in the eye and refused to flinch or make any noise, even when Abe brushed dirt and grit from one of the gashes.

"The Girl-Roxanne is not wanting to show any pain," the Vortigaunt said quietly. "She has never known any life but war." Abe took a medical kit from one of the supply crates stacked at the foot of the bed, and quickly bandaged the young woman's cuts. "We who see with a thousand eyes can read your pain, childâ€” it is a part of all you humans, as beautiful and fragile as all the rest."

The bandages had been dipped in the green nanomedicinal gel â€“ one of the few beneficial things the Combine had introduced to Earth â€“ and Roxy could actually feel her skin knit up in moments. She gazed into the Vortigaunt's bright red eye and found herself feeling more and more uncomfortable, as though all of her secret fears and desires were being laid bare.

She abruptly leapt to her feet with a brusque "thank you" to stalked off to the lift, her face burning. Pierre, more confused than ever, followed after her, leaving Abraham alone in the ward with the two unconscious fighters. The old Vortigaunt sighed and leaned more heavily upon his staff, slipping into the Vortessence. Ever so simple, these humans are, and yet so impossible to truly understand, he thought sadly.

Especially their young ones, another presence commented.

Most of you are children compared to one as old as I, Abe rejoined to a chorus of mental "chuckles." And these humans are but infants. The Girl-Roxanne is young, one of the last generation of the humans. Soon, she will no longer be young, and then their race will pass into the void. The thought saddened him, for he'd grown attached to these irrational, heroic, squabbling, loving rebels in the few years he'd known them.

Perhaps not, O revered elder, a presence from another part of the world said. I have felt stirrings in the music of the universe. It may be that the Free Man and his patron prepare to make another move, to strike another blow against our Enemy.

Perhaps, Abe thought dourly. But while the Free Man's motives may be pure, those of his patron are masked even to such as we. All we can do is wait.

End
file.